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Ceylon Tea Gatherers.

(Rev. W. Welchman, M.A., in 'The Church Missionary Gleaner'.)

A missionary once suggested that whenever those who took an interest in God's work in foreign lands drank a cup of tea they



A KANDIAN CHIEF.

should utter a silent prayer for China. And the missionaries who are working on the tea estates of Ceylon would fain make a similar request. In Ceylon many thousands of coolies, superintended by hundreds of Europeans

toil in the blazing sun 'clearing,' 'digging,' 'lining,' 'plucking,' and 'pruning,' while others are working in the store, 'weighing' leaf, laying it out to 'wither,' 'rolling,' placing on 'fermenting' tables, 'firing,' and packing; and day by day a little band of God's servants are doing all they can to tell these workers of the love of God, and to teach the children of Him who took the little ones in His arms and blessed them. Will not those at 'home,' who love their cup of tea, pray that God's blessings may come down upon those to whom they owe so great a luxury.

It is difficult to find people nowadays who do not know at least a little about Ceylon. Many have friends in the island, and many have read Miss Gordon Cumming's and other fascinating books speaking of the land and people. Yet there are some who do not know, as for example the old woman in a Midland town who, when the curate told her that he was going to Ceylon, prayed him not to do so as he would be eaten by cannibals. On being assured that there were none in the island, her fears did not abate, for she supposed that even if there were no cannibals there were tigers, and he would most certainly be devoured by these. For the sake of those who are ignorant of the country, we would wish to write much about it, and it is difficult not to do so. We gaze in this fair land on scenes of indescribable beauty. Nature has showered her charms with lavish hand, and has welded together giant peaks, rippling streams, dancing fountains, dense jungles, and pleasant plains into one sweet fairyland. And not in the landscape only. There are beauties everywhere—in the rich colorings of birds and insects, and in a thousand other objects. But not of these things must we speak, but of human souls.

Visitors to Ceylon generally take a trip 'up country.' The journey is delightful. Leaving hot and steamy Colombo, one ascends gradually in the train to a height of about 6,000 feet, and the climate becomes simply perfect. The views all along the line are magnificent, and generally call forth exclamations of astonishment and delight from those who see them for the first time. Very soon after leaving Colombo the tea estates appear, and continue more or less in evidence all the way up. Sometimes the eye is wearied by the monotony of the straight lines of tea, but where the growth is more

luxuriant, the field looks like a soft carpet of delicate green. Pretty bungalows are often seen, and stores, and factories, and other sights which tell of the activity of the tea industry, and of the important part it plays in the commerce of Ceylon. There are now about 1,500 tea and coffee estates in the island, employing a labor force of about 400,000 Tamil coolies. There are besides in each estate a small number of educated Tamils who have the more responsible and difficult work to do.

Ceylon is not the home of the cooly. He comes from India, and is generally more or less of a rover, and in this and other ways gives his doré (master) a good deal of trouble. His great idea is to save a few rupees and go back to his 'coast.' Of him much might be said, both bad and good. He is on the whole a very good worker, but is not noted for truthfulness or morality of any kind, and is as a rule utterly indifferent about religious matters. Though nominally a Hindu, he knows very little about his religion, and seems principally to fear demons, whom he tries in sundry ways to propitiate. On each estate there are long rows of buildings called 'lines,' in which the coolies live, often huddled up together in a way that might make Charles Kingsley turn in his grave; but great credit is due to the planters, who are doing all they can to make the dwellings of the people better and more conducive to morality. But 'Ramasami' does not like a nice house. Give him a close, stuffy, tumbling-down hut; utterly unventilated and full of smoke, and he is supremely happy.

At daybreak the coolies are summoned by the 'tom-toms' to work, and it is interesting to watch them coming from all parts of the estate to the 'muster-ground.' Some will be clothed in old, cast-off frock coats, some in scarlet military uniform, while some will have simply a cloth tied round them, or a blanket to keep them warm. After 'muster'

they are all sent off to their various duties, and at four or five in the evening they return and give an account of the day's work, and have their names entered in the 'check roll.' Their work is then finished for the day, and they return to the 'lines.' The women prepare the rice and curry, and the men squat,



COOLY WOMAN PLUCKING TEA.

sit, or lie about, talking, smoking, or gambling, the inevitable 'tom-tom' being the noisy accompaniment of all. They generally retire early, but on moonlight nights they often sit up and dance, and seem thoroughly to enjoy themselves.

It is among these people that the Tamil Cooly Mission works. About forty years ago the Church Missionary Society was invited by a number of planters to commence the work, and since then it has been carried on uninterruptedly. The society is responsible for the stipend and expenses of the European missionaries, but the planters themselves provide most of the funds for the native catechists. At present there are three European superintendents. Each has



AT WORK IN A TEA PLANTATION.

an immense district to look after, and each has under him a number of catechists and schoolmasters. In all there are now about forty catechists and fifty schoolmasters. In Kandy, a town in the centre of the northern division, there is a regular pastorate, with fully ordained native clergymen, Bible-women, and other workers, and the society has lately sent out a lady, Miss Finney, to work amongst women there.

The missionaries spend their time going about the country, much of which is still in a very wild state, and they are dependent upon the kindness of the European planters, whose hospitality it would be impossible to speak too highly of. The journeys from estate to estate are sometimes enjoyable and sometimes quite the reverse. A ride of ten or fifteen miles in the middle of the day in the blazing sun or in drenching rain is not exactly pleasant, nor is fording a river in monsoon weather. But fatigue and discomfort are forgotten as soon as the warm and cheery welcome of the planter is heard. After a quiet evening and a good, sound sleep, the missionary is awakened about 5.30 a.m. by a knock at the door and a call, 'Sar, sar.' Up he jumps, dresses, and hurries off to the 'muster-ground.' Two or three hundred, or even more, coolies will be gathered together, and for a few minutes he speaks to them of the Great Father of all, and seeks to lead them from the dim ideas they have of Him to the fuller revelation made by Jesus Christ. How that short time is valued, and how soon it passes away, and how many are the prayers offered that the message may be used by God to bring blessing to those who hear.

Most probably there will be a school somewhere near, and this will be visited during the day. Perhaps there will be a nice brick building, or perhaps only a mud and thatched shed. Still there will always be the bright, happy face of the master, waiting to welcome, and the hearty 'Good morning, sir,' or 'Sa-laam' of the children as they rise to greet the missionary. There will be wee mites there with scarcely any clothes on, learning to form their letters in the sand, and there will be bigger boys and girls of various ages and looks and clad in a variety of ways. Often does the missionary's heart burn as one and another of the children give bright and clear answers to the questions put, and declare that they do love Jesus and desire to follow Him, and he yearns that they may grow up to be true Christians, not only believing on Jesus, but living like Him amidst surrounding sin and ignorance. Many of the schools are supported by friends of individual missionaries and by others interested in mission work. Sometimes there are Christians on the estate, and the missionary will often go and gather them around him in the 'lines' and read God's Word and speak briefly about it, seeking to encourage and to lead to greater holiness of life and then commit all to the good God above.

There are now about 2,000 Protestant Christians on the estates, and the number is constantly increasing. There are of course amongst them not only the earnest, but the lukewarm and the backsliders. Many are faint and weak, and some are always stumbling and cannot stand alone, and do not seem to understand that there is strength in Christ to keep as well as salvation from sin's punishment. But, on the other hand, the missionaries are often wonderfully encouraged by the consistency of the great mass of Christians. Many planters will come forward and give the highest testimony as to their lives, and there are many ways by which the sincerity of their faith may be tested.

For instance, liberality is often a sign of

true spiritual life. If so, the native Christians are most decidedly genuine. Not only do they give liberally to the native church fund and to the building and up-keep of churches, but they are themselves supporting several catechists who are working amongst the heathen on the estates. Besides this, remarkable cases of individual generosity are constantly heard of. One man, a conductor, the other day spent Rs. 100 in purchasing a magic lantern and Rs. 900 on slides representing the life of Christ, and now goes about showing it to the coolies on estates, and speaking to them of the good things Christ came to make known. So earnest is he that he is thinking of giving up his employment, a very lucrative one, and becoming a catechist.

Or again, men often test the spiritual state of a Christian by his earnestness. Here, too, the Tamil shows that he is truly God's servant. It is no easy matter even for a native to get up and walk ten miles to church and ten back in the burning midday sun, and yet this is what many of them do. Now, is it a trifling matter for the catechists and schoolmasters to give up their time and all to the work when they could get much more remunerative employment elsewhere? nor for the Christians, as they often do, to stand up in the open air and testify for Christ?

Then, again, we can test their spirituality by their surrender to the will of God. An overseer on an estate built a small room, and had it nicely fitted up with doors and windows. Day by day he gathered together as many as he could, both Christians and heathen, read God's Word to them, and prayed. On being asked his reason for so doing, he replied, 'God has taken six of my children to Himself, now I want to win six souls for Him' (i.e., to have six spiritual children). There are many in favored England who could not say 'Thy will be done' with the simple faith of this poor uneducated Tamil.

And once more, by what they give up for Christ, by their reverence and devotion, and by their desire to know God's will, do they show that their profession is no mere empty boast 'to be like master,' but that God's Holy Spirit has indeed made them new creations in Christ Jesus. Not long ago a youth who had learned about Christ in one of the schools was turned out of his father's house for refusing to take an offering to the little 'swami (idol) house' on the estate, and a few days ago a man was beaten very severely for going to the schoolmaster's house to read the Bible and learn of Jesus.

There is discouragement and disappointment; but often do the missionaries rejoice and praise God for the grace He gives to those who seek to follow Him, and for the apparent reality of the Christian's faith.

Sometimes the seed sown takes root and springs up quickly and yields an abundant harvest. Two of the catechists at present working in Ceylon were laborers on estates, and first heard the Gospel at 'muster.' Now they preach to others and win others to the faith, of which a few years ago they themselves were ignorant. Sometimes the seed springs up after many years. A few years ago a young man was anxious to be baptized. His father was a bigoted Hindu, and opposed his son's conversion in every way, by entreaty and by threat. For sometime the son wavered, but at last, in spite of all obstacles, he came forward boldly and was received into the Church of Christ. Last year the old father, who had so persecuted his son for believing on the Saviour, was himself baptized. With tears in his eyes he stood beside the font, one of his chosen witnesses being his son, who showed by the

smile on his face how intense his joy was that at length his father had yielded to the strivings of his Spirit, and had put his trust in Jesus Christ.

A Cradle Hymn.

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber;
Holy angels guard thy bed;
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
House and home, the friends provide,
All without thy care or payment;
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from heaven He descended,
And became a child like thee!

Soft and easy is thy cradle;
Coarse and hard the Saviour lay,
When His birthplace was a stable,
And His softest bed was hay.

Blessed Babe! what glorious features,
Spotless fair, divinely bright!
Must He dwell with brutal creatures?
How could angels bear the sight?

Was there nothing but a manger
Cursed sinners could afford,
To receive the heavenly stranger?
Did they thus affront the Lord?

Soft, my child; I did not chide thee,
Though my song might sound too hard;
'Tis thy mother sits beside thee,
And her arms shall be thy guard.

Yet, to read the shameful story,
How the Jews abused their King,
How they served the Lord of glory,
Makes me angry, while I sing.

See the kinder shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky!
Where they sought Him, where they found
Him,
With his Virgin Mother by.

See the lovely babe a-dressing;
Lovely infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the holy child.

Lo, He slumbers in his manger,
Where the horned oxen fed;
Peace, my darling, here's no danger,
Here's no ox a-near thy bed.

'Twas to save thee, child, from dying,
Save my dear from burning flame,
Bitter groans and endless crying,
That thy blest Redeemer came.

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise!

I could give a hundred kisses;
Hoping what I most desire;
Not a mother's fondest wishes
Can to greater joys aspire.

Isaac Watts.

You may not be able to leave your children wealth or the inheritance of a great name or eminent social advantages; but you can leave them the results of fidelity and precious memories of devotion to the holy task of trying to make them know what God says to us in the Old and New Testaments, and what he wants us to believe and to do and to be.—Dr. F. A. Noble.

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"Why not knock down in earnest?" asked Will.

"What?" said Ed.

"How fresh you are! Jiminy! Don't you know what 'knock down' means? It's what car-conductors and lots of other folks do: it's no harm—as long as you're not found out."

"Do you mean steal?" stammered Ed.

"If you want to call it by such an ugly name."

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" And Ed's tone expressed unspeakable loathing and disgust.

"Couldn't do that!" said Will, mimicking Ed's tone; "how mighty virtuous you are—all of a sudden. What you been doin' all long but stealing—from your mother?"

Ed looked up in shocked dismay.

"That's 'bout the size of it," said Will, laughing in high glee; "but don't be so down in the mouth; might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb—see? I know where you can get things right from a store as easy as nothing—just slip them off the counter when no one's looking. I'll show you how it's done. Bless me! What's the matter? What you so red in the face about? Got apoplexy, or swallowed your sleeve-button?"

"You got me into this thing," said Ed, in a great rage; "you made out that it was all right, no harm, just being smart, an' now you turn round an' call it stealing an' want me to steal in real earnest. I've found you out, Will Adams!"

"Don't say so!" sneered Will; "found yourself out, you mean. You're no baby. You took the whole thing in hunkadory, an' mighty glad you were of a chance to squeeze a cent or two out of your dear ma. You needn't throw the blame on me, and make out that you're a snow-white, just-ready-to-fly-away-to-heaven angel."

"I'd ought to have scorned the mean thing in the first place. I'd ought to have said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,'" said Ed, excitedly.

"That's good," said Will, provokingly. "Satan's shoulders are broad."

"I'm not excusing myself," said Ed, humbly.

"Oh, ain't you?"

"I'll go straight home and tell mother."

"I would! Tell what a great bad boy Will Adams is, and what a sweet little creature you are."

"I'll tell the truth," said Ed, scornfully; and with a mock bow he hastily betook himself to his heels.

But truth-telling takes courage sometimes. Ed waited until Edith had gone to bed, and then with his little money-box in his hand he went to his mother's side. Mrs. Walton looked up, and seeing the troubled look in her boy's eyes, laid aside her sewing.

"What is it, dear?" she said.

Ed tried to speak, but a big lump in his throat choked him. Mrs. Walton put her arms about his neck and kissed him, and then Ed broke down utterly.

"I've been so bad, mother," he sobbed.

Mrs. Walton's face grew very pale, but she replied, encouragingly: "You remember the old proverb, dear, 'A fault confessed is half redressed.' Tell mother all about it."

"This is my Christmas money," faltered Ed, "and part of it I didn't get honestly."

Mrs. Walton was too shocked to speak, and Ed stumbled on:

"Twenty cents of it I—I stole!"

"O my dear boy!" moaned Mrs. Walton.

Ed felt as if he had stabbed his mother. The tale was soon told.

"Here's the twenty cents, mother, it's yours. I wouldn't use it for the world;" and a weight seemed suddenly to fall from Ed's shoulders, and he drew a long sigh of relief.

"My! I wouldn't have believed that twenty cents could be so heavy," Ed declared, with a smile, half gleeful, half rueful. "Can you ever trust me again, mother?"

Instead of replying, his mother folded him in her arms. Ed did not soon forget that hour. His mother showed him how grave the danger to which he had been exposed—that by just such slight and easy steps in wrong-doing were careers begun which often ended in complete moral ruin.

Ed spent some time the following Sabbath afternoon in committing the words of the Psalm, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

"That's got to mean you, Ed Walton," he said to himself, "Christmas money or no Christmas money! 'Clean hands, clean money, and a clean gift,' mother says. You've got to scratch 'round, Sir Edward, pretty lively, too. Mother and Edith shall have nice presents, bought with honest money, mind you!"

"I do believe it's snowing," Ed ejaculated, a moment later. "Hurrah! there'll be lots of shovelling to-morrow!"

Ed's was a true prophecy. Not only was there 'lots of shovelling' Monday, but at intervals also during the week. When Saturday night came—the Saturday night preceding Christmas—Ed counted his little store of money, and clapped his hands in an ecstasy of delight.

"Three dollars! If that ain't jolly! I b'lieve the Lord has smiled on me, just as mamma says, since I took to doing right."

Two radiant beings celebrated Christmas from early dawn until the evening bright and serene.

"I think ever so much more of your present 'cause you earned every cent of it yourself," Edith declared for the twentieth time and as a final preliminary to saying, 'Good-night'.

"And you made every stitch of that bag for my books, and it's just a beauty," Ed reciprocated. "I thought I shouldn't have any sort of a time, and it's been just the nicest Christmas! Glad I said 'Merry Christmas' to Will Adams this morning! Didn't he look glum, though!—'Zion's Herald.'"

A Welcome.

The winds of dark December roar,
The hail beats on the window-pane;
Pile up the fire, throw wide the door
To welcome Christmas back again—
A light on life's dark wintry tide
To brighten every fireside.

It comes with many a glad surprise,
And loving tokens rare and sweet—
Perchance good angels in disguise,
With friends we long had sighed to meet:
And hands and hearts unite again,
After the parting and the pain.

While children of the merry heart,
Are sporting round the Christmas tree,
Amid our smiles a tear may start
For friends afar or o'er the sea;
Or those beyond Time's restless tide,
Who wait us on the other side.

While loving gifts we gladly greet,
'Tis still more blessed to impart.
A Christmas boon with kindness meet,
To some forsaken, lonely heart
At Christmas—Christmas ushered in,
To still the storm of human sin.
—'The Christian.'

The Widow Waspey.

(*'British Workwoman.'*)

CHAPTER I.—WHO DID IT?

Swiftly the news sped. The cottage in Green Hill Lane was burnt to the ground, and its tenant, the widow Waspey, a lone woman who lived by herself, had not since been seen.

The fire was a mystery; nobody knew anything about it, and the queries were as to how it originated, and whether the late occupant had perished in the flames.

The village folk flocked to the ruins, and wonder and conjecture were at their height. Two boys, though not desirous of courting notice, listened eagerly to all that was said. For some reason or other widow Waspey was no favorite with the boys of West Dutton, with whom and herself there was open and constant war. Acting on this knowledge one present turned to the lads and asked if they knew anything of the fire.

"No," was the emphatic reply; at the same time the elder of the two, a stout boy of ten, shot an uneasy glance at his companion.

"Who saw her last?" inquired another.

"I did, yesterday."

The answer came from the younger boy, at sound of whose quavering voice all eyes turned his way.

"Where did you see her, Tim?"

"Going up the lane."

"This lane?"

Tim nodded, but his face looked whiter than usual, while his friend, with a hurried whisper in his ear, led him away, and soon both boys were tearing down the lane.

This, perhaps, strengthened the suspicion that the boys of West Dutton were responsible for the fire in Green Hill Lane, and rumor changed to certainty when a few days later it became known that Tim, the younger of the two boys already mentioned, had been accused of the deed, and brought before Mr. Stevens, the local magistrate.

But when charged and questioned, though his cheeks were very white and his eyes very large, Tim stoutly denied any knowledge of the fire.

"If you had not a hand in it, perhaps you know who had?" asked the magistrate.

"No, I don't, sir," answered Tim.

And when further questioned, though he admitted that another boy was with him when he last saw the widow in Green Hill Lane, he would not reveal his name.

"I must know who that boy is," said Mr. Stevens.

"Please, sir, I can't tell you," answered Tim, respectfully.

"But you must tell me; I must know his name at once."

Tim shook his curly head and was silent, and as threats and persuasions alike were useless, and it was imperative that Mr. Stevens should get to the truth of this matter, he remanded Tim, and ordered him to be locked up in the village police station, and brought before him another day.

CHAPTER II.—AN ACCUSER.

"Little Tim in prison; Tim locked up!" An awed, incredulous look overspread a stout, fair-haired boy's face as he whispered the words to himself.

"What is he locked up for?" he said aloud to his mother.

"Because Mr. Stevens thinks that he and some other boy have had a hand in this fire." The boy's eyelids lowered over his eyes. "And he won't say who the other boy is," added his mother; "but come, Harry, have your tea; I'm as sorry for little Tim as you are; I believe he's a good little chap, and hasn't done any harm, but I'm not so

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sure about the boy who was with him; it is about him that Mr. Stevens wants to know, and he will do his best to find out. But fancy a little fellow like Tim preferring to be locked up sooner than get his mate into trouble. I should say that his widowed mother was proud of him. I should be proud of you, Harry, if you were noble enough to do the same.

Harry's cheeks were very flushed, and he drank his tea as fast as he could. Presently, as he pushed the remains of a slice of bread and butter on one side, he asked:

'Will they keep Tim on bread and water, mother?'

'I don't know, dear; I can't say.'

'And lock him up in a dark cell?'

But again Mrs. Birt was unable to give a satisfactory reply, and, feeling very miserable, and with hands pushed deep down in his trousers pockets, Harry strode into the garden.

He was very wretched, and though the sun shone brightly, and the air was soft and sweet, and the birds were singing, there was no joy nor happiness in his heart as he strode moodily on and threw himself down under the branches of a wide-spreading tree.

Then a voice within him, which, whether he liked it or not, would make itself heard, began to speak.

'Tim locked up,' it said, 'this beautiful evening, when he ought to be enjoying himself. And Tim was such a timid, nervous, little fellow. And if he were locked up in a dungeon, and his slender wrists loaded with chains—Harry pictured them in size bigger than Tim himself—he would die, and he would be his murderer.'

Harry hid his face in his hands, his fingers ruffled his hair, his cap fell to the ground, and as he sat he reviewed a certain memorable afternoon in his history, for the explanation of which we must go back in our narrative.

It was the day that Tim last saw the widow Waspey. The sun shone brightly, and Green Hill Lane looked its best. The widow's pretty cottage, covered with honeysuckle and roses, vied in beauty with her trim front garden, while the window, in front of the spotless lace curtains, was full of most rare and beautiful geraniums.

About four o'clock two boys came down the lane. Widow Waspey was out, otherwise not even the boys of West Dutton would have come to a standstill in open daylight before her gate. Hitherto all mischief-loving persons had carried out their evil designs in the dark, for the widow had suffered no little persecution. But the boys knew that they had nothing to fear, and marched straight to the gate, lifted the latch and walked in.

'All right,' said the elder, 'there they are,' and he pointed straight at the widow's parlor window, where these beautiful geraniums bloomed in all their glory.

'Ain't they stunners! Did you ever see anything like them?'

They stood in breathless admiration, then, sad to relate, proceeded to business. The casement, which unfortunately had been left unfastened, was quickly opened, and with exclamations of delight the flowers were ruthlessly gathered.

'Are you going to take them all?' asked the younger boy, who was only a spectator. 'Won't you leave her one?'

'No, not one,' was the answer. 'I wish I could see her when she comes home.'

'You would be afraid to stay for that. I shouldn't like widow Waspey to catch us here.'

The thought of her so doing turned the little boy's rather pale face a shade paler, and his great brown eyes distended with

fear, as he looked uneasily from the pink and crimson blooms in his companion's hand to the gate beyond.

'Well, it is not likely that she will catch us,' answered the latter. 'If she's gone to market she'll not be back till seven. I believe she's gone to sell her eggs.'

'Perhaps to sell her flowers,' said the other boy.

'Then why didn't she take them with her?'

'Perhaps she couldn't carry them,' and with a touch of regret in his voice he added, 'Suppose she was going to sell them, and now she can't.'

'But what makes you think that she was going to sell them?' asked the other with impatience.

'I don't know. People do sell their flowers, and I should be sorry for widow Waspey if she were going to sell hers.'

'What a queer little chap you are,' was the reply. 'All the better if she were. It is time we paid her out.'

But somehow, notwithstanding this assertion, the speaker began to feel unhappy. But the deed was done.

As Harry reviewed these doings he bitterly regretted that afternoon's work. He it was who had gathered the widow's flowers. He was the leader in the mischief, and, greatly against little Tim's will, he had made him accompany him on this errand.

'Poor Tim,' mused Harry; 'I wish he hadn't come with me.'

But to wish was of little use; the remedy was to act. But how could he act? How could he confess the part that he had taken? What would be thought, what would happen, if he said that he had been at the widow's cottage that afternoon? If he owned to taking her flowers, folk would say that he had set her house on fire. Harry was in a terrible fright. He was much more to be pitied than brave little Tim, silently suffering for the good of another; and when at length he rose from his seat, and made his way home, he was undecided what he should do.

That evening there broke over West Dutton a most terrible thunderstorm; the lightning flashed with scarcely any intermission, and loud and long rolled the thunder.

In an ordinary way Harry was not a bit afraid, but now he seemed in a terrible fright. His face was bathed in dew, his teeth chattered, his blue eyes were glazed with fear.

Mrs. Birt, who had never seen her boy so frightened before, tried to soothe him, but her efforts were in vain, and as one crash louder and more appalling than the rest seemed to rend the very heavens, Harry's fears gained the mastery. He could bear it no longer; it was terrible to have this trouble weighing on his mind; he must confess all and tell his mother.

In low, broken, contrite tones he gasped out his story. He told what he had done, how he picked the widow Waspey's flowers, and threw them away in the field at the back of her house, and Tim knew that he had done this, and he wouldn't say for fear of getting him locked up; and he would go to Mr. Stevens on the morrow and tell him, so that Tim might be let out.

In an agony of remorse Harry gazed into his mother's face.

Mrs. Birt was too grieved to scold. Harry had sadly disappointed her, and she was sorry beyond words that he should have done an act of wilful mischief, above all that he should allow Tim to suffer for his fault.

'If you had only confessed before,' she said, 'Tim might have been at home now with his poor mother.'

But kind hearts were with Tim that night,

and more than one of the prison officials showed him kindness, and Tim, who had wronged nobody, lay quiet and trustful, praying that God would guard his mother, and hoping that his dear Harry would never be suspected of burning widow Waspey's cottage.

The next morning, at an interview at Mr. Stevens's private residence, Harry told his story and confessed his fault, and when the magistrate had severely reprimanded him for his mean and cowardly conduct, he added, with his sternest manner, that though he had no proof to convict him for so doing, he should not feel satisfied, but that, by some act of carelessness or otherwise, he was responsible for the fire, and till that mystery was solved he should look upon him with disfavor.

Then, with an assurance that Tim should be released, mother and son were dismissed, and with a heart even heavier than her boy's, Mrs. Birt walked slowly home.

She, more than Harry, knew how greatly this incident might affect his future. Mr. Stevens was one of the leading men in West Dutton; he took an interest in the welfare of its boys, and many on their entrance into life remembered him with gratitude. He respected those who helped themselves, those who made the best of circumstances, and he had always regarded the Birt family with special favor. But now, though he was too just to visit Harry's sins on his parents, Mrs. Birt knew that he would never hold out a helping hand to young Harry as long as this stigma rested on his character—till it could be ascertained how the fire in Green Hill Lane originated. Harry's name would not be cleared. And as the days sped on, and no widow Waspey made her appearance, conjecture amounted to certainty that she had perished in the fire. From this date the Birt family were regarded with suspicion; every one seemed to shun them; none were friendly but little Tim and his mother, who by thought, word and deed set an example of kindness and consideration to everybody.

No one but the Birts themselves knew how greatly they wished for widow Waspey's appearance, and this was the state of affairs on a certain day when Mrs. Birt visited some old friends of hers—a mother and daughter who lived on the other side of the hills, a long way off.

They were a lone couple, in a lone cottage by themselves, and Mrs. Birt's cheery visits were regarded with pleasure. She sat between them, with a hand on each, telling her news. She spoke of the fire, of widow Waspey's disappearance, and as they were such very old friends, almost like her own kindred, she told about Harry and little Tim, and how all the neighbors, indeed mostly every one in West Dutton, looked on Harry with disfavor.

'And it all comes of that one naughty act,' added Mrs. Birt. 'I declare when one once gives way to sin there is no knowing where it may stop—it is like a ball rolling down hill, and I often ask myself whether it is possible that Harry had a hand in this fire.'

Then her friends told their news. It was not much, nothing of importance, but every little item had an interest, and they related how one night, the very night of the thunderstorm, they had been awakened by a noise—a dull, low, moaning sound outside the threshold of their door, and on looking from the window they saw a woman, a poor, lone, solitary figure, sitting on the step; she was huddled all of a heap, her knees drawn up to her chin, while she sat and rocked and moaned.

They were a lone pair, and not very brave, but a woman could not do them much harm,

Boys and Girls.

The Nativity.

(Thomas Buchanan Read.)

The air was still o'er Bethlehem's plain,
As if the great night held its breath,
When Life Eternal came to reign
Over a world of death.

All nature felt a thrill divine
When burst that meteor on the night,
Which, pointing to the Saviour's shrine,
Proclaimed the new-born Light.

Light to the shepherds! and the star
Gilded their silent midnight fold;
Light to the wise men from afar
Bearing their gifts of gold.



'WHEN SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT.'

Light to a realm of sin and grief;
Light to a world in all its needs;
The Light of Life, a new belief
Rising o'er fallen creeds.

Light on a tangled path of thorns,
Though leading to a martyr's throne;
A light to guide till Christ returns
In glory to his own.

There still it shines, while far abroad
The Christmas choirs sing now, as then,
'Glory, glory unto our God!
Peace and good will to men!'
—'Wait.'

Mrs. Mariner's Mince Meat.

(By Laura J. Rittenhouse.)

The pleasant, motherly face of plump little Mrs. Mariner wore a serious air quite unusual to it, that bleak, cold December-day, as she sat by the well-scrubbed kitchen table chopping apples.

A new tub more than half full of chopped beef, and great yellow bowls of currants, raisins, preserved citron and orange peel told plainly that some of Mrs. Mariner's famous mince-meat was in course of preparation.

'I'll just own up, I feel blue, Huldah. First, the drought burnt up half the corn crop and spoiled a chance of Irish potatoes, then them three big hogs up and died, and that meant good seven hundred pounds of pork lost, that we'll need before spring. And right on top of everything else, the colt must needs go and break his leg and have to be shot, and your father was to a-got a hundred dollars for him from Dr. Arter, so's he could pay the interest on the money we borrowed to send Tom to college.'

'Yes, it does seem discouraging, mother, but after all, things might be worse. Sellim and Queeny are left, and if we can't raise the money any other way, we can sell one of them,' said Huldah, the only daughter, and the sunshine of the Mariner homestead.

'Sell Sellim or Queeny! Why, Huldah Mariner, I'd a-most as soon sell one of the family. It'd be a sin and a shame to sell one of them faithful old critters,' Mrs. Mariner said reproachfully.

'Of course, we'd not do it, mother, unless the very worst should come, and I hope and believe it will not.'

Mrs. Mariner smiled a little. 'What a child you are to see only the bright side of things, Huldah. Well, land knows I'm glad Mr. Sampson wanted to buy so much of my mince-meat, at any rate. It'll help out wonderful, for we was beginning to need sugar and coffee and sech like, and with Tom comin' home for Christmas, and bringin' his

does, and if nobody ever gets to drinking till my mince-meat makes 'em do it, I guess they'll all die sober,' Mrs. Mariner said sharply.

'But, mother, some man who is trying to stop drinking might be tempted to begin again, if he got a taste of brandy in your mince-meat. Suppose, for instance, Tom, or some one else we loved, were trying to begin a new life after he had fallen, wouldn't you be afraid to let him taste a drop of brandy, no matter how much it might be disguised in other things?' asked Huldah, her sunny face growing serious.

'I declare I never thought of it that way before, Huldah. Maybe I'd better leave the brandy out, after all. You may get the grape-juice, but I know the mince-meat 'll taste flat as a pancake, and like enough Mr. Sampson won't take it. He's awful fond of his brandy, you know,' said Mrs. Mariner, reflectively.

'Another good reason for not using it, then,' Huldah said, cheerily, greatly relieved that her mother had been so easily influenced.

So the mince-meat was finished, and to any unperverted taste would have seemed almost perfect in quality. The two women carried it out and placed it in the light spring waggon, and Huldah drove briskly down to Mapleton to Mr. Sampson's grocery store.

That gentleman saw her and came out and carried the tub of mince-meat inside, where it was deposited on the counter with a flourish.

'I'm glad it's come,' he said to Huldah. 'I've had at least a dozen orders for it already. Every one knows what splendid mince-meat your mother makes, and they all want some for Christmas. Only a hundred pounds,' he said, as he weighed it. 'Pity there isn't more. Do you want the money, Miss Huldah, or is there anything you'd like to buy to-day?'

Huldah gave him quite a list of things needed, and he bustled around to fill her order, pausing, however, long enough to taste the tempting mince-meat.

'Why—Miss Huldah, there's something the matter with it, isn't there? It doesn't taste one bit like your mother's mince-meat,' he said in blank surprise.

Huldah's face turned crimson.

'We hadn't any cider, and mother used vinegar,' she said, 'but we put in grape-juice instead; we thought that would make it quite as good.'

Mr. Sampson took another taste and shook his head disapprovingly.

'It lacks something besides cider. Oh! I know what it is—it's brandy! There isn't any in it, is there?'

'No!' she answered simply.

'Didn't you have any? I can give you some, and you can stir it in right here.'

'No, thank you. We've concluded it isn't right to use brandy in mince-meat, and we never shall again,' she said firmly.

'I thought you and your mother were too sensible to get such cranky notions in your heads,' he said, making an effort to speak pleasantly, though any argument for temperance always angered him.

Huldah said nothing.

'I don't want to hurt your feelings, Miss Huldah, but you'll have to put some brandy in this, or my customers won't buy it,' he said decisively.

'I'm sorry, Mr. Sampson, but indeed I can't do it. My conscience will not allow it.'

'Very well, then, you can take the meat home and eat it yourselves. I'm not going

high-toned friend with him, I don't know what we'd a-done. There! I'm through choppin' apples, and I'm not sorry, I can tell you. I'll dump all the ingreiences in the tub and mix 'em up.'

Silence for ten or fifteen minutes, while Mrs. Mariner poured raisins, currants, orange peel, citron, suet and odorous spices into the tub of chopped meat, and Huldah vigorously stirred the cake she was making.

'Hand me the vinegar jug, Huldah, please. My hands are too sticky with molasses to touch anything. Seems like this mince-meat won't be fit to eat without cider to mix it with. If only the apple crop hadn't been so scarce, we might have had plenty of it, same as usual.'

'Well, I'm glad we haven't. I've never felt right about using cider since Mr. Saxton preached about it last summer. I've seen Tom drink more of it than was good for him several times,' said Huldah.

'Well, he'll not do it this winter, because there ain't any. My! if this vinegar don't spoil the mince-meat, it'll be a wonder. It don't smell one bit like my mince-meat. Oh! I'd most forgot the brandy. Give me the decanter, Huldah. It's in the pantry on the middle shelf, in the right-hand corner,' said Mrs. Mariner, intent upon mixing the mince-meat, which almost filled the tub.

Huldah drew a little, quick breath. She had hoped her mother would forget the brandy, and now that she had not, the girl was at a loss what to do.

'Mother, don't put any in this time, please,' she said coaxingly.

'What! not put any brandy in my mince-meat? Huldah Mariner, are you stark crazy? Why, it wouldn't be fit for anything then, sure enough.'

'Oh, yes, it would be, mother. Let me open three or four cans of grapes and pour their juice in, instead. They say it is finer than brandy, and no danger of making any one want to drink intoxicants afterward.'

'Nonsense! You needn't tell me grape-juice could give the snap to it that brandy

to palm it off on my patrons as it is,' he retorted, angrily.

Huldah's heart sank within her. There was no other place where she could sell the mince-meat, and they were really in need of the groceries she had ordered. The family purse was empty, and Tom and his chum would be there next day. She glanced down at her shabby shoes, too, and thought of the sorry appearance they would make before the young man, and for a moment a sharp little struggle went on in her heart.

After all, it might be no harm would come of it if she put the brandy in. No harm ever had come of it before, so far as she knew, but—but there was only one right way, and that was the sure one.

'Very well, Mr. Sampson, I'm sorry to have displeased and disappointed you,' she said, looking at him steadily, the color dying out of her face, and leaving it very pale.

Without further words Mr. Sampson picked up the tub and carrying it outside, put it into the waggon with a bang.

Huldah climbed in and drove homeward with a heavy heart but a clear conscience, while Mr. Sampson went back into the store grumbling.

'If the old lady doesn't come to her senses and send the girl back here with that mince-meat well brandied, as it should be, I'll miss my guess. They're in a bad fix just now, I know, because the old man has been laid up a month or two, and they have had hard luck all summer. I wouldn't be afraid to wager they're clear out of groceries, and will have to come back and ask me for credit.'

This was said half to himself and half to Judge Dougherty, who had been looking over a paper as he waited for Mr. Sampson to have leisure to make out his bill.

The Judge did not reply, but sat for a few minutes looking intently at his paper without seeing a word. Presently he went over to his office and wrote a note to a friend living in the city, who was a temperance man, and also a dealer in groceries.

As a result, Mrs. Mariner received a letter next day, ordering all the mince-meat she had for sale, and as much more as she chose to make during the winter.

This lifted a great load from the hearts of the two women, and with the mince-meat that Huldah shipped that day went an order for necessary groceries, much to the chagrin of Mr. Sampson, whom Judge Dougherty had delighted to inform of the transaction.

When Tom and his friend got off the train at Mapleton that evening, and had to wait a short time for Huldah, who had been unavoidably delayed, the Judge repeated with great gusto the whole story of the mince-meat.

'I tell you, Tom, Huldah's a sister any man might be proud of. I saw her looking down at her little half-worn out shoes, when Sampson said he wouldn't take the meat unless she put the brandy in it, and I thought sure she'd give up then, but she didn't. Principle before either shoes or groceries for her every time. I tell you she's a plucky little thing, and she melted my old heart up so completely, that I resolved then and there, neither cider nor brandy should ever go into any cooking at my house again, to tempt me or mine, or any other man at my table.'

Tom listened with a heart swelling with brotherly love and pride.

'It's just like Huldah. She'd wade through fire and water before she'd go back on her principles,' he said with glistening eyes.

'Wait till you know her, Ned, and you'll stop your cynical nonsense about the shal-

lowness, selfishness and insincerity of women, won't he, Judge?'

'He will if he has half as much sense as he looks to have,' said the old Judge bluntly.

And so it proved. Before the two weeks of vacation had passed away to Ned Oakley it seemed as if the whole world had changed.

The simple, wholesome, cheerful atmosphere pervading the old farm-house, the kind, motherly heart of Mrs. Mariner, the cheerful, uncomplaining spirit of her suffering husband, and Huldah's steadfast earnestness and sunny unselfishness had revealed a phase of home life of which he had had no previous conception.

And when the glad Christmas day was ushered in with whirling flakes of feathery snow that transformed the old homestead into a winter idyl, Huldah first helped her mother to prepare the bountiful dinner, the crisp vegetables, the plump big turkey, and delicious temperance mince-pies, then with Tom and Mr. Oakley snugly tucked up in the sleigh, drove down to Mapleton to join in singing the joyous anthems, and to listen to the old, sweet message of 'Peace on earth, good will toward men.'

And in her life a new star had arisen, for she had read in Mr. Oakley's loving eyes as she fastened her pretty hood upon her head, that

'Tying her bonnet under her chin,
She tied a young man's heart within.'
—'Union Signal.'

A Christmas Carol.

It came upon the midnight clear,
The glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
'Peace on earth, good will to men,'
From heaven's all gracious King,
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

For, lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Edmund H. Sears, D.D.

The Saviour's Birth.

Why in tones so sweet and tender
Sing those angels from on high?
Why that star so brightly beaming
In the glorious eastern sky?

'Tis to tell a wond'ring people
Of a gentle Saviour's birth;
That He brings (this Prince of glory)
Peace to men, good will on earth.

'Tis to spread the words of comfort,
That to each and all He'll bring;
That the silv'ry star is beaming,
And the white-robed angels sing.

Then will we, in songs of gladness,
Sing His praises far and wide;
Glorifying God above us
For the joyful Christmas-tide.

—'Wail.'

Ed's Christmas Money.

(By Elizabeth E. Backup.)

Ed had a feeling of profound pity for himself. It never occurred to him that it was either weak, or selfish, or wicked, to cherish this sentiment. Of course he loved his mother, and was sorry for her, but then a boy must consider himself occasionally. It was a shame to be pinched in this way. When his father was alive, Ed had his mice money, and the money for shovelling snow, and he was paid for lots of little odd jobs. Now he set the trap and caught the silly mice just the same, but he never got his ten cents as he used to. His mother said they were poor, but Edward was not satisfied with this solution of the problem. Ed brooded over the subject, and at length his reflections brought forth fruit in kind.

'Do you know you can get milk at Brown's for five cents?' said Will Adams, one day.

'Is that so?' said Ed. 'Why, we pay six at Seymour's. Good milk, is it?'

'Good as any store milk,' Will replied; 'when we get extra, I buy it there, and pocket the other cent—see?' and Will grinned, hideously.

'Humph!' said Ed, thoughtfully; 'and your mother, she knows?'

'No, indeed!' said Will; 'she'd declare the five-cent milk wa'n't as good as the six-cent. Trust this child for holding his tongue! You were bemoaning your hard luck, and I thought I'd let you into my scheme for getting a bank account. You buy other things for your mother, and I can tell you the places where you can get cheap goods.'

'Cheap in quality as well as in price, p'rhaps,' said Ed, doubtfully.

'Not a bit of it,' said Will. 'I save a cent or two on lots of things mother sends me to buy. There's nothing like having one's eye-teeth cut;' and Will smiled complacently.

'I want awfully to get some money for Christmas,' said Ed; 'but I never see a cent nowadays 'cept when I'm sent on some errand. It's mighty rough on me. I wish I could earn some money. It's a pretty scarce article up to our house.'

'Well, here's your chance, and all perfectly above board. Your mother gives you so much to buy a thing, you get it for less, and the difference is yours. But mum's the word, or you'd have to fork over your change.'

Ed did not accept Will's suggestion very enthusiastically, but he turned it over and over in his mind until he made it seem quite right and reasonable.

'Mother needn't be so stingy,' he argued with himself; 'then if I weren't going to spend every cent I get on mother and Edith, it would be different. Will spends his money on himself. There may be a slight hitch in the principle of the thing, but in my circumstances it's just as right as right can be.'

'I believe when I want extra milk I shall be obliged to order it from the milkman,' Mrs. Walton said, one day. 'It's pretty poor stuff you bring from Seymour's these days.'

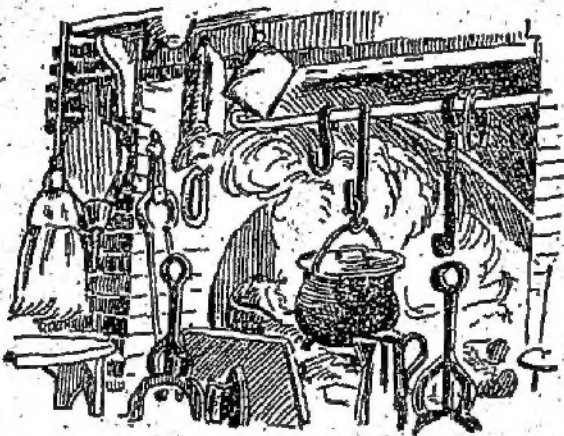
Ed colored, but said nothing. Similar criticisms were occasionally made upon other articles which Ed had purchased, but he pocketed his ill-gotten gains and remained silent. Snow came, and with it some opportunities to earn money by shovelling paths for the neighbors; and yet Ed was a long distance from a bloated millionaire.

'I've been counting my money to-day,' he said to Will, 'and with all my scrimping I possess the munificent sum of ninety-five cents. It won't get half the things I want.'

What Makes Christmas Best of All?

What makes merry Christmas time
Happiest of all the year?

'Then,' said Tom, 'old Santa Claus
Comes with sleigh and reindeer;



'Fills our stockings full of toys,
Gives us tops and balls and sleds.'
'Brings us dolls,' said little May,
'With truly hair upon their heads.'

'Then we have a splendid feast,
With turkey, chicken, boiled and
roast.'

But sweet Alice said, 'Because
Then we love each other most.'
—'Mayflower.'

What do the Christmas Offerings Mean?

Suppose to-morrow to be your
big brother's birthday. You have
been thinking of it for months, not
wondering what gift to make to
him, but thinking what you your-
self would like, trying hard to guess
what papa and mamma, grandma
and uncle, are going to give you.
To-morrow comes; you can hardly
wait to dress, but, with hair half
brushed, rush down to the break-
fast-table, eager, noisy, delighted
with the lovely presents awaiting
you.

Tom has his long-wished-for bi-
cycle, little Jack a 'just like a live
pony,' May a new book-case, mam-
ma a sparkling jewel, and papa, in
a new dressing gown, enjoys it all.
But your dear oldest brother, whose
birthday it is, sits sad and forgot-
ten. No one has remembered to
prepare a gift for him. Do you
not think that a shabby way to
treat him on his birthday?

Now, the Bible says Jesus Christ
is our 'elder brother.' The twenty-
fifth of December—Christmas—is
His birthday. Shall we celebrate
it by giving presents to those we
love, and receiving sweet gifts from
them, and offer nothing to Jesus
Himself, that dear brother who not
only loved us, but loved us so dear-
ly that He suffered and died for us?

When Jesus was a tiny baby,
wise men came a long journey to
bring Him precious gifts. One
brought gold, another frankincense
and another myrrh. Jesus is no
longer here on earth to receive our
gifts, but there are many little
children who have no Christmas,
who never heard of Jesus, but who
pray to ugly little images. They
have no books or schools; and when
they are sick and in pain, their par-
ents can do nothing to help them,
and often leave them to die. Jesus
said, What ye do for the least of
these, ye do unto me.

Now if we bring our Christmas
offerings to send missionaries who
will help these little children and
tell them of Jesus and his love for
them, it is just the same as if we
laid the gold and frankincense and
myrrh at His feet, as the wise men
did. Jesus takes the dimes and the
love we bring with them, as His
precious birthday gifts.—'Children's
Work for Children.'

Amy's Gift to Jesus.

It was a merrier Christmas than
usual in little Amy's home. Of all
the preparations, it would be use-
less to attempt to tell you. Of
course, the Christmas tree was the
central object of attraction. A
beautiful sight it was as it rose in
the large parlor of Mr. Graham's
handsome residence, and at night,
when the lights had been lit, the
tree sparkled and glittered as only
Christmas-trees can, and the happy
crowd of little ones clapped their
hands in high glee, and shouted
their admiration. Indeed, Amy's
brother, Douglas, gave the wildest
hurrah his father and mother
thought they had ever heard. It is
pleasant to be able to say that
many little children were present
who lived in lowly homes, and who,
but for Mr. and Mrs. Graham's
kindness, would not have spent a
very merry Christmas.

Every child, and every guest, and
every servant in the house were
remembered, and all seemed so
happy that it would have not been
easy to increase their joy. But
somewhat suddenly Amy's face as-
sumed a serious look, her merry
voice was hushed, and she stood in
thoughtful attitude for a few mo-
ments.

'What is the matter with my lit-
tle pet?' asked her father.

'Papa,' she said, 'I put a present
on the tree for Jesus, and I forgot

all about it, and no one has taken
it off. I'm so sorry I forgot it. Will
Jesus mind, papa?'

Amy had forgotten, but her fath-
er soon discovered the present for
Jesus hid away behind the branches
of the tree, and low down—for Amy
was a little girl and could not reach
very far. And what do you think
the present was? Many in the
company smiled, but her father did
not. A few months before papa
had given her a small gold locket
as a birthday present, shaped as a
heart, and she always called it her
little heart. This it was which she
hung on the tree. On her paper in
which she packed it she had print-
ed the words, 'For Jesus.'

On the last Sabbath she had
heard the preacher at church speak
of giving something to Jesus as
well as to our many friends, and
she caught the words, 'We can
please Him best by giving Him the
heart.' So Amy determined to give
Jesus her gold heart, and she
thought, of course, she must put it
on the tree.

Her father closed the Christmas
night's entertainment by telling
her and all the little visitors that
Jesus wanted something better
than a heart of gold; and some of
us think that Amy did that night
give her own living heart to Jesus,
and that some others of the party
soon after did so, also.—Am. Paper.

Christmas Bells.

The bells are ringing,
Why do they ring?
To welcome the birthday
Of Christ the King,
Who life and love
To the world did bring.

The bells are ringing,
What do they say?
'Put from your hearts
All sin away;
Christ be throned
In your thoughts to-day.'

—'Waif.'

The philanthropic millionaire,
recently deceased, Enoch Pratt, of
Baltimore, was in the habit, it is
said, of walking from his home to
the bank to save the car fare. 'Only
five cents?' he would say. 'Sir,
don't you know that one hundred
dollars would have to work nearly
a whole week to earn that five
cents?' No one ever became rich,
in money or knowledge, that ignor-
ed the value of trifles.



The Price of a License.

What's the price of a license? How much did you say?

The price of men's souls in the market to-day?

A license to sell, to defame and destroy, From the gray hairs of age to the innocent boy—

How much is to pay?

How much is to pay? How compare with your gold?

A license to poison—a crime oft retold—
Fix a price on the years and the manhood of man;

Take what is not yours to destroy if you can—

What's the price, did you say?

How much for a license? How reckon the crimes

Men are caused to commit when besotted at times?

To take character, reason, foredoomed to the grave,

And give men your curses when pity cries 'Save!'

What's the price, did you say?

How much for a license? Count the price of the home;

Of the tears that are shed in its anguish and gloom;

Count the happiness lost on the vote that you gave

When you voted the license that made man a slave.

What price was to pay?

How much for a license? Count the price of her life

Whom your children called mother and whom you called wife;

Who died of her grief, heart broken away,
That her home was left bare of its bread day by day,

The license to pay.

How much is to pay? Count the price of one soul,

Multiplied by the names on eternity's scroll,
Of those who have gone, once in manhood's strong pride,

Then add those who through them have suffered and died—

What's the price, did you say?

How much is to pay? You count out the gold,

But the price to be paid has never been told,
Count the measure you mete out your neighbor to-day,

To be meted you back—but in God's time and way,

'Tis a debt you must pay!

—Mrs. S. A. Gordon, in 'Voter's Orders.'

How It Is Done.

(By Dr. Samuel Smiles.)

'I say, mate,' said one workman to another, as they went home one evening from their work, 'will you tell me how it is that you contrive to get on? How is it that you manage to feed and clothe your family as you do, and put money in the penny bank besides, whilst I, who have as good wages as you, and fewer children, can barely make ends meet?'

'Well, I will tell you. It only consists in this—in taking care of the pennies!'

'What! Is that all, Ransom?'

'Yes, and a good all, too. Not one in fifty knows the secret. For instance, Jack, you don't.'

'How? I? Let's see how you make that out.'

'Now you have asked my secret, I'll tell you all about it. But you must not feel offended if I speak plainly. First, I pay nothing for my drink.'

'Nothing! Then you don't pay your shot, but sponge upon your neighbors.'

'Never! I drink water, which costs nothing. Drunken days have all their to-morrows, as the old proverb says. I spare myself sore heads and shaky hands, and save my pennies. Drinking water neither makes a man sick nor in debt, nor his wife a widow. And that, let me tell you, makes a considerable difference in her outgo. It may amount to about half a crown a week, or £7 a year. That £7 will clothe myself and children, while you are out at elbows, and your children go barefoot.'

'Come, come; that's going too far. I don't drink at that rate. I might take an odd pint now and then, but half a crown a week. Pooh! pooh!'

'Well, then, how much did you spend on drink last Saturday night? Out with it.'

'Let me see; I had a pint with Jones. I think I had another with Davies, who is just going to Australia; and then I went to the lodge.'

'Well, how many glasses had you there?'

'How can I tell? I forget. But it's all stuff and nonsense, Bill.'

'Oh, you can't tell? You don't know what you spent? I believe you. But that's the way your pennies go, my lad.'

'And that's all your secret?'

'Yes, take care of the penny—that's all. Because I save, I have when you want. It's very simple, isn't it?'

'Simple? Oh, yes; but there's nothing in it.'

'Yes, there's this in it; that it has made you ask me the question how I manage to keep my family comfortable, and put money in the penny bank, while you, with the same wage, can barely make ends meet! Money is independence; and money is made by putting pennies together. Besides, I work so hard for mine, and so do you, that I can't find it in my heart to waste a penny on drink, when I can put it beside a few other hard-earned pennies in the bank. It's something for a sore foot or a rainy day. There's that in it, Jack; and there's comfort also in the thought that, whatever may happen to me, I needn't beg nor go to the workhouse. The saving of the penny makes me feel a free man. The man always in debt, or without a penny beforehand, is little better than a slave.'

'But if we had our rights, the poor would not be so hardly dealt with as they are now.'

'Why, Jack, if you had your rights to-morrow, would they put your money back again into your pocket after you had spent it? Would your rights give your children shoes and stockings, when you had chosen to waste on beer what would have bought them? Would your rights make you or your wife thrifter, or your hearthstone cleaner? Would your rights wash your children's faces, and mend the holes in your clothes? No, my friend. Give us our rights by all means; but rights are not habits, and it's habits we want—good habits. With these we can be free men and independent men now, if we but determine to be so. Good-night, Jack; and mind my secret. It's nothing but taking care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves.'—
'League Journal.'

A Mother's Influence.

It was a dreary winter's night; the streets were deserted, the gusts of chilly rain dashed with violence on the house awnings, while the street lamps shone with a sickly glare. Huddled in the corner of a doorway, shivering and hungry, was a ragged little boy. Now and then persons wrapped in their huge coats, hurried by to their warm homes; and an occasional hack, filled with drunken men, drove rapidly by. The lad saw all this as he longed for morning to appear; and overcome with fatigue, he fell sound asleep. By a singular freak of nature he dreamed of downy white beds, and most lordly feasts; but, alas! this felicity was doomed to perish; for a police officer, going his rounds, rudely awakened him.

'What yer doing here?' gruffly asked he, giving him another shake by way of emphasis.

The little fellow blinked his eyes in astonishment; for the transition from the banquet to his present position was indeed a sudden one.

'Where do yer live?' inquired the policeman, thinking he had captured an embryo burglar.

'I ain't doin' nothing,' blurted the boy, beginning to cry with fear.

'Why don't yer go home?' once more queried the custodian of the peace.

'I'm waiting for—my brother.'

'Where is he?'

'In there,' answered the lad, pointing to a beer saloon a few doors away.

'Why don't yer go in and keep him company? Yer can't sit here.'

Still sobbing as if his heart would break, he replied: 'I—promised my mother—when she died—never to go into a place where they sell liquor; and so did my brother; but he's broken his promise, and—gone in there.'

'Are both your parents dead?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Who takes care of you?'

'John does when he's sober, but lately he's drunk all the time.'

'Come along and I'll get yer a bed,' said the officer, taking the lad by the hand and leading him up the street.

The little fellow remonstrated that he wanted to wait for John, but his guide paid no attention to him.

They presently reached the city prison. The boy struggled to get away; the horror of the place frightened him, but his efforts were useless. A bunk was given him, and he wept himself to sleep.

The pauper ward being full, the lad had been placed in one of the tanks, and on awakening the next morning he saw the many faces of hardened sinners. He sat watching them with curiosity and fear. Ere long, members of the Young Men's Christian Association entered to hold morning services for the prisoners. Their singing filled him with joy, and their prayers with awe.

When they departed his attention was called to a man seated with his face in his hands, and apparently weeping. For some moments this continued, when, to his surprise, he recognized in the man before him his brother. The little fellow rushed to his side; both embraced, and the younger cried piteously at the other's grief.

On the following Sunday they were seen in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association. The expression of eagerness with which they listened to the sermon told plainly that the seed sown at the prison was not in vain. A new era in their life had begun. John never drank again; and the happy brothers are now known in the South Sea Islands as most zealous missionaries.—
'Association Bulletin.'

and when the storm came on with all its rage and force they opened the door and invited her in.

'And she came,' said the old friend's daughter; 'but you never saw such a poor, weird thing as she was—quite crazy, beside herself; she could do nothing but moan and groan, and she wouldn't speak, nor eat, nor drink, but only moaned and cried, and there she sat till morning, and then she got up and went away.'

'And where did she go?' asked Mrs. Birt. They did not know; the nights had been dark, and they had not seen her.

'But for all that we have heard her,' they said; 'she walks round and round the house, sighing and singing a low, wailing dirge, and though we've opened the door and called her, she would never come.'

Agreeing with her friends that this poor creature was out of her mind, Mrs. Birt rose to go, and was soon on her homeward journey.

The sun had sunk, twilight was deepening into night. It would soon be dark, but Mrs. Birt was not afraid; there was no case on record of any one having been molested in those parts. Her path skirted the steepest of steep hills, a valley, deep and dark on either side—picturesque, shady, and cool at daylight; weird, gloomy, and solemn at night. No sound broke the stillness. Five, ten, fifteen minutes elapsed, and then something arrested her steps; a sound fell on her ears—a strange, peculiar, unfamiliar sound, a low, weird, faint moan, not the wind—the night was still and calm—nor was it a bird of prey, nor anything but the sound of a human voice, filled with pain, moaning for human aid.

Mrs. Birt stood and listened; then she cautiously advanced and peered into the valley, but she could see no one, only a dark, indistinct mass, but gradually as her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she was able to distinguish the outline of a human form, and remembering the poor lone creature that her friends had told her about, she hastened towards it.

CHAPTER III.—HOW IT HAPPENED.

A woman with tangled hair, gaunt eyes, and haggard face met Mrs. Birt's kind gaze, and as she placed her hand on her shoulder and asked what was the matter, a piteous moan fell on her ears. But as she continued her queries, adding an assurance that she wished to help her, there came a loud, lamenting cry that she had no home—nothing, nothing, all burnt to the ground, and her flowers gone, too.

'Your name?' asked Mrs. Birt, 'tell me your name?'

But though the question remained unanswered, Mrs. Birt knew that she beheld the widow Waspey. Sadly altered, almost past recognition, but the widow Waspey she was. Then Mrs. Birt's cheeks grew pale, she felt tempted to run away, and leave the widow to her fate. She remembered that her evidence might convert suspicion to certainty and get Harry into trouble. What if she should accuse him of burning the cottage?

But her better nature asserted itself, and instead of abandoning the lone creature, she persuaded her to get up and go home with her.

'You will be all right,' said Mrs. Birt, 'but you must not remain in the cold and damp any longer; you look nearly starved.'

The grey head nodded.

'I've had nothing but water and berries, but I'm not going to the workhouse.'

'No, you are not going to the workhouse; you are coming home with me.'

And with the words Mrs. Birt passed her arm through the widow's, and gently led her

by an easy incline from the valley to the path beyond, while the latter moaned and groaned, that her house was burned, her home was gone, and the wicked, wicked boys of West Dutton would be the death of her.

Thus at length they reached Mrs. Birt's cottage.

'It is the widow Waspey, mother!' said Harry, with bated breath.

And at the sound of a boy's voice the widow gazed affrightedly around. But the chief thing was to make her comfortable, and with that end in view Mrs. Birt placed her in an arm-chair by the kitchen fire; then she bustled about to prepare hot food and a good cup of tea, and the next thing was to get her to bed, with a hot bottle at her feet and plenty of warm bed clothes; and by the time it was noised abroad that the widow Waspey was found, she was fast asleep in a good, comfortable bed.

And while all this was taking place Harry moved about the house with flushed cheeks and glistening eyes. Mrs. Birt could not read his thoughts. She was unable to tell whether he was afraid, or whether he was pleased; but other matters claimed her attention, and she could but trust that when the widow awoke she would not openly denounce Harry.

It was some days before widow Waspey's reason returned, before she was able to give rational answers to Mrs. Birt's questions; but at last, little by little, memory came back, gradually a look of intelligence overspread her wan face, and she was able to string together past events.

Mrs. Birt was sitting by her side, busy at work, when she told what she had been doing, and what she had done, on and before the day of the fire.

'I had been to market,' she said. 'I went to sell my eggs, and to arrange about selling my flowers—my beautiful geraniums that grew so well in my parlor window. Mr. Cutbush, the florist, said that he would buy them, and I might send him as many plants as I could rear, and I went home so pleased and happy, though as tired as I well could be. It was nearly dark when I got in, and I lighted the lamp, and set a match to the fire, and made a cup of tea and a slip of toast—'

Widow Waspey paused; she had some difficulty in going on, but after a moment she added:

'The trouble came then; for fear of the boys, or for fear of any one looking in and stoning me, I thought I would pull down the blind and shut the shutters, and take a look at my beautiful flowers, and as I did so I thought I was dazed or gone silly, for there was not one single bloom on any plant—every one gone, only bare stems and stalks left.'

'And what did you do?' asked Mrs. Birt. 'Do?' echoed widow Waspey, 'I don't know what I did. I think I was just beside myself. I can't think how it happened, not even now, but I suppose that I turned suddenly round, knocked against the table and upset the lamp, for in a moment the room seemed in a blaze, and I only remember rushing out, and I can't tell what followed.'

Mrs. Birt was strangely agitated; she listened with eager interest, her work resting on her lap as she did so.

'Then it was the lamp that set your cottage on fire?' she asked, 'and not a boy?'

'No, a boy did not do that, but like as not one of the boys picked my flowers, and if it hadn't been for that wicked mischief, in all probability the fire would not have happened.'

'Probably not,' said Mrs. Birt, 'and, unfortunately, I know the boy who did pick your

flowers—and sorry enough he is for so doing.'

And then she told the widow what part her own boy had taken in this unhappy affair, and when Harry was called and came, and expressed his penitence for what he had done, widow Waspey frankly forgave him, reminding him with tear-dimmed eyes that his afternoon's frolic would be the means of placing her in the workhouse.

'For I'm too old, and too poor and too broken-spirited to do anything for myself,' she wailed. 'I've always had a horror of the poorhouse, and have done my best to keep out of it, and have prayed to be kept from it, but without a roof and nowhere to go, and without a shilling in the world, there's nothing but that left me.'

'We won't talk about the poorhouse now,' said Mrs. Birt, kindly. 'My good man will be home from sea soon, and he will say the same as I, that you must stay here till you get well and strong.'

And the widow Waspey did stay at the Birts' pretty cottage, not only till she was well, but for some weeks longer, and during that time some wonderful things were set on foot for her benefit.

Not only did Mr. Stevens take an interest in her case, and Mrs. Birt's husband also when he returned, with a pocket full of money from his long voyage, but others in West Dutton manifested a desire to help the widow, and some months later, when she was well able to get out again and take an active part in life, she was once more reinstated in her old cottage, rebuilt and refurnished by the contributions of many friends, not the least among whom were the boys of West Dutton. Headed by Harry Birt and little Tim they gladly gave time and money to accomplish this object. Of the latter they had not much to give, but all gave what they could, and thus a goodly sum was collected.

The widow Waspey has now no truer friends than the lads of West Dutton, while Harry Birt and Tim are never so happy as when helping her to tend and rear her flowers, a plentiful supply of which may generally be seen in the wide, spacious market of West Dutton. Thus we leave her in peace and plenty and daily realizing the love of a merciful Providence.

A Christmas Carol.

(By James Russell Lowell.)

'What means this glory round our feet,
'The magi mused, 'more bright than morn?'
And voices chanted, clear and sweet,
'To-day the Prince of Peace is born.'

'What means that star,' the shepherds said,
'That brightens through the rocky glen?'
And angels answering overhead
Sang 'Peace on earth, good will to men.'

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for Him like those of yore;
Alas! He seems so slow to come.

But it was said in words of gold
No time or sorrow ere shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving will incline
To that sweet life which is the law,

So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,
Sing, 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

And they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angels' song,
'To-day the Prince of Peace is born!'

Little Folks.

In the Orphan-House.

(A Legend of Christmas Eve.)

They sat at supper on Christmas Eve,

The boys of the orphan school,
And the least of them all rose to say

The quaint old grace in the old-time way

Which has always been the rule:
'Lord Jesus Christ, be Thou our guest,

And share the bread which thou hast blessed.'

The oaken rafters holly bedight
And brave in their Christmas guise,

Cast shadows down on the fair young face,

The hands clasped close with childish grace,

The reverent wistful eyes;
And for a moment as he ceased

Silence fell on the Christmas feast.

The smallest scholar he sat him down,

And the spoons began to clink
In the pewter porringers one by one,

But one little fellow had scarce begun

When he stopped and said, 'I think'—

'And then he paused with a reddened cheek,

But the kindly Master bade him 'speak!'

'Why does the Lord Christ never come?'

Asked the child in a shy soft way;

'Time after time we have prayed that He

Would make one of our company
Just as we did to-day,

But He never has come for all our prayer,

Do you think he would if I set Him a chair?'

'Perhaps! who knoweth?' the Master said,

And he made the sign of the cross,

While the zealous little one gladly sped

And drew a chair to the table's head

'Neath a great ivy boss,

Then turned to the door as in sure quest

Of the entrance of the Holy Guest.

Even as he waited the latch was raised,

The door swung wide, and lo!

A pale little beggar boy stood there
With shoeless feet and flying hair—

All powdered white with snow.

'I have no food, I have no bed,
For Christ's sake take me in,' he said.

The startled scholars were silent all,

The Master dumbly gazed;

The shivering beggar he stood still—
The snow flakes melting at their will—

Bewildered and amazed

At the strange hush; and nothing stirred,

And no one uttered a welcoming word.

Till, glad and joyful the same dear child

Upraised his voice and said,

'The Lord has heard us, now I know,

He would not come Himself, and so

He sent this boy instead
His chair to fill, His place to take;

For us to welcome for His sake.'



Then quick and zealous every one
Sprang from the table up,

The chair for Jesus ready set

Received the beggar cold and wet,

Each pressed his plate and cup.

'Take mine! take mine!' they urged
and prayed,

The beggar thanked them, half dismayed.

And as he feasted and quite forgot
His woe in the new content,

The ivy and holly garlanded
Round the old rafters overhead

Breathed forth a rich, strange scent,

And it seemed as if, in the green-hung hall

Stood a Presence unseen which
blessed them all.

O lovely Legend of olden time,
Be thou as true to-day!

The Lord Christ stands by every door,

Veiled in the person of His poor,
And all our hearts can pray,

'Lord Jesus Christ, be thou our guest

And share the bread which Thou hast blessed.'

—Susan Coolidge in 'Wide Awake.'

A Queer Horse and Buggy.

The horse is a reindeer, and the buggy is very much like a canoe, and of course it has no wheels.

You know your father's harness has traces and reins. But this harness has only one trace and one rein. The trace is fastened to the collar and to the sled. The rein is thrown over the right or left side of the horse when the driver wants him to turn to the right or left.

Would you like to take a drive like this with your father? Because if you lived in Lapland, and

your father were a Lapp and you were a little Lapp, you would have to ride this way.

If your reindeer should die, your father would take the hair from the skin and make cloth of it. Then he would take the skin and make good leather; from the horns knife handles, spoons, and other things would be made.

You see, the people in Lapland would find it hard to live without the reindeer. Just think how God always gives people and animals what they need to live in this world, wherever he has placed them.—'Buds of Promise.'

People seldom improve when they have no model but themselves to copy after.



My Class For Jesus.

(By a Toronto Sunday-school Teacher.)

My precious class for Jesus,

Who did so much for me:

Who paid the price which justice claimed
In hours of agony.

'Tis little, O my Saviour!

That my weak hand can give;

Oh, let me win these thoughtless ones
To look to thee and live.

My whole dear class for Jesus!

Now in their youthful bloom;

Ere shadows lie across their path,

Dull sickness and the tomb—

While life is in its morning,

And bright hopes cluster high,

May these immortal souls lay up
Their treasure in the sky.

My whole dear class for Jesus!

Oh, let not one be lost;

When Calvary was the fearful sum

Their wondrous ransom cost.

One little step may sever;

The parting veil away;

And forms that now are glad and fair
To-morrow may be clay.

For Jesus! Oh, for Jesus!

The time is fleeting fast;

The holy Sabbaths hasten by,

Soon, soon will come the last—

Then, teachers, toil for Jesus,

As ne'er ye toiled before,

That each may bear a precious sheaf

To yonder shining shore.

—'Christian Guardian.'

Kindergarten Methods in Country Sunday-Schools.

Miss Mary B— had attended the State Sunday-school Convention, and as a primary teacher she was present at the conferences for primary teachers. Of course, the kindergarten was discussed, and as she listened to the experienced teachers, who talked about the philosophy of kindergarten methods, and the delight which children have in learning when taught accordingly, she began to wonder what there might be in it all that could be useful to her in her class of little country children.

'Country children like to have things made pleasant for them just as well as city children,' she said to herself, 'and I fear I have not been doing very much to make their lessons very attractive to them.'

She thought of the bare corner with its stiff benches, intended for grown folks, where she met her class every Sunday. It was so different from the lovely class-rooms advocated by those who were setting forth the kindergarten ideas applied to Sunday-school work that courage almost failed her.

'If I should ask them how kindergarten plans could be worked in a country Sunday-school, they could not tell me,' she said to herself. 'So I will just go home and work it out for myself.'

And this is what she did: She had four screen frames made of pine; these she stained with cherry, and filled them in with strips of matting. On the inside of one of the screens she put flexible blackboard cloth, so as to have a blackboard in conven-

ient shape. She knew it would be impossible to get permission to have the seats removed, and put comfortable little chairs in their place, so she had a shelf ten inches wide, fastened to each seat to make a foot-rest for the children. It was attached with hinges, so that it could be dropped when grown people should occupy the seats during church service. Stiff iron hooks and staples held it in place when the children were using it. The screens shut the teacher and class out from the sight of the school. The hum of the class work did not disturb them because they were busy at their own humming inside the screen.

The next thing Miss B— did was to provide a sand-box, which she made herself, taking a box about three feet long, two feet wide, and six inches deep, filling it with sand; for she had heard at the convention that a sand-map would be useful in showing the location of the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, with paper tents to picture the encampment; and how the same sand-box could be used to make the map of Palestine, locating Jericho in the lesson about crossing the Jordan, also the six cities of refuge, and even how it would serve to trace the journey-line of the Israelites on their way from Egypt to Canaan.

On the first Sunday in the cosy corner, there was a finger exercise which Miss B— had seen given by one of the teachers at the convention, which described Peter and six other disciples going fishing, and toiling all night and catching nothing, and then getting a net full of fish when Jesus told them to cast out on the right side.

Miss B— had seen sewing-cards at the convention. She sent for them, and on each successive Sunday each child carried home a card to stitch during the week, which had on it a design connected with the lesson, and the golden text to study while stitching. The delight of the children hardly knew bounds. So many parents came just to take 'a peep into that corner,' that suddenly there was a largely increased attendance at the school, and fresh interest was awakened. Miss B— was prevailed upon to remove the screen during the closing exercise of the school, and repeat some of the kindergarten exercises. Other teachers, seeing the interest thus aroused in all of the classes in the school, were impelled to seek out ways of improving their methods of teaching, and, as a result, the whole school was lifted upon a much higher plane of usefulness.

It may interest teachers in the country to know how Miss B— compassed the expense of fitting up her cosy corner. She enlisted a friend, who was a carpenter, to make the screen frames and put up the foot-rests for her, having secured the lumber as a gift from another friend. She purchased matting for fifteen cents a yard, and blackboard cloth for seventy-five cents a yard: the sand-box cost her nothing, as she got an empty box from the store, and filled it with sand herself. The expense of the sewing-cards for her fifteen scholars, and the teachers' help which gave her finger exercises, etc., was met by doing without a new dress which she had once thought she must have. But after she had demonstrated the wisdom and beauty of her plans, there was no need of such self-denial on her part.—Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts, in 'Sunday-School Times.'

'Live more with Christ, catch more of His Spirit; for the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. And the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we will become.'—Motto of the Student Volunteer Movement.

Getting or Giving.

There was a time when the custom of giving presents to scholars in the Sunday-school on Christmas was a general one; but for ten or fifteen years the current has been running in the other direction, and at present a Sunday-school that gives candy or toys or books or other gifts to its scholars on this festival, instead of giving those scholars an opportunity to bring in their offerings for those who are poorer than themselves, as a token of their gratitude to Christ, is behind the times, and cannot be counted as really a well-managed Sunday-school. Moreover, it has been found, by repeated experiment, that the scholars are readier than their teachers to adopt this plan, and to adhere to it when adopted, and that scholars in the humbler walks of life, and of more limited means, have a greater interest in it than those of the well-to-do classes. It is quite proper for individual teachers to give tokens of affection to their scholars individually, or for individual scholars to give to their teachers, on Christmas, or at any other time; but for a Sunday-school to assume the position of a giver of Christmas presents to its members, instead of proffering to its members an opportunity of giving in Christ's name and spirit, is a lowering of the tone of the Sunday-school, and is a perversion of its spirit and mission. If children come to Sunday-school for the candy and toys they can get there, they are less and less likely to be satisfied with their pay; but if they go to Sunday-school in order to share in the giving to others, they will gain more than they hoped for. The best Sunday-school entertainments on Christmas, in city and in country, in church-schools and in mission-schools, are those at which teachers and scholars alike bring up their offerings, large and small, and present them before the Lord with appropriate singing and recitations and prayers. The Sunday-school that knows nothing by experience of this sort of entertainment is to be pitied, and should be invited to try it for once, so as to be sure to try it again.—'Sunday-School Times.'

Be Tender.

Be tender, little heart, and true,
In hours of joy or gloom;
Like lily, which in shade or sun
Gives still its sweet perfume.
Be faithful, little hands and feet,
Bright eyes and tuneful tongue;
God smiles not on the royal robes
Of gold and purple spun.

Twin stars of truth he made your eyes,
To read his gleaming page;
To note the wonders of his hands,
And brighten darksome age.
Your lightsome, dancing feet he gave
To run in duty's way;
And clever little hands to help
At work as well as play.
—'Waif.'

Never Out of Sight.

'I know a little saying
That is altogether true;
My little boy, my little girl,
The saying is for you.
'Tis this, O blue and black eyes,
And, gray, so deep and bright,
No child in all this careless world
Is ever out of sight.

'No matter whether field or glen,
Or city's-crowded way,
Or pleasure's laugh or labor's hum
Entice your feet to stay;
Some one is always watching you,
And, whether wrong or right,
No child in all this busy world
Is ever out of sight.'
—'Little Pilgrim.'

HOUSEHOLD.

Suggestions For the Christmas Dinner.

Here are a few suggestions for the Christmas dinner.

A nice soup to begin with is celery cream soup. It is made as follows:—Boil a small cup of rice in three pints of milk until it will pass through a sieve. Grate the white portion of two or three heads of celery on a bread-grater; add this to the rice milk after it has been strained; put to it a quart of strong white stock; let boil until celery is perfectly tender; season with salt and cayenne and serve. If wanted rich, substitute one pint of cream for the same quantity of milk.

Your tomatoes to go with the roast turkey or beef may be prepared by putting in a buttered baking dish a layer of bread or cracker crumbs seasoned with bits of butter, then a layer of tomatoes (canned ones just as good as fresh), seasoned with pepper, salt, and sugar if desired, then another layer of crumbs, and so on, finishing with crumbs. Bake one hour. This dish may be prepared early in the day, thus making it easier for the busy housewife.

A chicken salad may be made the day before. One recipe runs as follows:—One chicken weighing three pounds, one large cupful of chopped celery, four hard-boiled eggs, one cupful of chicken jelly, one cupful of dressing, one teaspoonful of salt, one-half teaspoonful of pepper, one cupful of vinegar. Boil chicken until tender, pick into bits, chop eggs fine and add to other ingredients and mix.

For dessert we will suppose that you want a simple plum pudding, with lemon sauce, and cream pie. The following recipes are vouched for by an American lady:

Plum Pudding—This pudding, as well as the sauce, may be made the week before wanted, as sliced, and sauce strained, it is as good as when first made. It sounds simple and is—but it is delicious. One heapful cupful of bread crumbs, two cupfuls of flour, one of chopped and seeded raisins, one cupful of suet made fine, one cupful of molasses, one of sweet milk, one teaspoonful of salt, cloves and cinnamon, one tablespoonful of soda. Boil two and a half hours in a tin pail placed in a kettle of boiling water.

Lemon Sauce—One cupful of sugar, juice and rind of one lemon, one tablespoonful of cornstarch, one dessertspoonful of butter, one-half pint of boiling water, the yolk of one egg. Stir up, but do not boil. Just before serving, add the beaten white of the egg.

Cream Pie—One-half pint of milk, one-half cupful of sugar, yolk of one egg, one tablespoonful of cornstarch, pinch of salt,

flavor with lemon; boil up. The crust should be first baked, then the mixture added. Frost with white of one or two eggs and brown slightly.

These few weeks before Christmas are always busy ones for the mother. There is the mince-meat to see after, the Christmas puddings must be made, the little ones must have some new dresses for the Christmas festivities, the clothes for the poor must be looked after, preparations must be made for all the season's gifts at home and abroad. And to do all this the poor, anxious mother slaves all day and far into the night, with what result? The puddings and pies, the dresses and presents are finished, it is true, but she herself is worn out and exhausted, and when Christmas comes, and the children are all home from school, and father has his few days' holiday, they cannot understand why the poor, harassed mother is so cross and nervous, so easily upset, so irritable. And they eat their pudding and wear their pretty frocks, but the joy is gone from it all, and too often there is a shadow on the joyful season and nobody quite understands why. The weary mother wonders to find so little sympathy; the others all wonder that she should be so 'cross' at Christmas time. There is so much sadness in such a scene as this! There is so much heart disappointment underneath! A little forethought could prevent it, and there would be rejoicing all round. Mothers, believe me, much as the little ones look for their Christmas gifts and Christmas fare, it is mother's smile and sympathy that sweetens these for them. Give them the smile, rejoice with them, even though the dresses are left unmade, and the house is not clean from top to bottom!—The Presbyterian.

Doll Competition.

The editors of the 'Messenger' and the Boys' Page wish to thank very heartily the girls who have so generously contributed to the proposed Christmas surprise. These girls have done splendidly.

It is true there were prizes offered for this competition, but the care with which the dolls have been made to look just as fresh and pretty as possible and the very sweet notes that came with many of them, saying nothing about the prizes, but expressing the hope of the one by whom the little treasure was sent that some little girl would enjoy the dolly as much as she had enjoyed dressing it for her—all show that there has been a great deal of loving work put into making wardrobes for these little ladies.

The prizes did not call for many pretty little finishing touches such as lace, embroidery, insertion and knitted woollen vests—all made by the girls themselves—and although these cannot count in awarding the prizes, yet they are all appreciated by those

who have the judging of the dolls in hand. The judges have all been very much interested to see what the girls could do and what they would do, and they are well satisfied with the result as far as it has been possible to examine the dolls.

But as about fifty dolls have come in it will not be possible to examine all before this notice goes to press, and we shall have to wait till next week to let the competitors know the welfare of the treasures which they have sent off with so much care.

Northern Messenger.

The following letter from one of our subscribers contains a good Christmas suggestion:—

'Dear Sir,—I have taken the 'Northern Messenger' for a long time, and think it a valuable paper, especially for the young. I am very much pleased with the change you have made, so much so that I have decided to take it for my two grandsons as well as renew my own subscription.'

It would be hard to find anything to give a friend or relation which would be more valuable or give more pleasure than a year's subscription for the 'Northern Messenger.' If you send it to two friends you get the two subscriptions with your own renewal for twenty-five cents each.

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BABY'S OWN SOAP

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